9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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individual ownership they have by no means entirely collapsed. The principle of service, of mutual aid within the local family groups, survives; the element of competition is reduced to a minimum. Though the old social laws have been "abolished" by acts of parliament, such external decrees could destroy only the superficial features and hardly touched the minds in which these customs were rooted. The primary unit of land division—the townland—is still a very real thing; and as the townland retains its Gaelic name even in the districts of Dublin and Belfast, so there survives beyond the city's influence the social fabric of the townland community. Reeves and Joyce have argued that the careful subdivision of Irish land points to the existence of a considerable settled population in remote antiquity, and recent archæological research supports this view. There are no less than 62,205 townlands in the country; their size, which varies from curiosities of less than an acre to large tracts of moorland of 1,000 acres, averages 325 acres.

The townlands in turn group themselves into baronies corresponding to the petty kingdoms of old. Writers tell us that even into the 19th century one barony could be easily distinguished from another by the dresses peculiar to each. Thus there were the dark blue and damson of Cork and Waterford, the grey of Kerry and the blue of Galway. A traveller in 1830 remarked wisely that "such peculiarities frequently point out the natural divisions of a country in more important matters than dress": they are an index to regional diversity. The distinctive features of particular districts are well illustrated in the case of "the Irish Flanders," the isolated tract in Co. Wexford comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth; while nothing could reveal the separateness of some island communities better than the heaviest punishment meted out to offenders in Rathlin or Clear I.: it consisted of "banishment to Ireland."

Enough has been said to suggest that the traditions of the Irish countryside are of long standing, and that many strains in those traditions are not only of Celtic but of pre-Celtic antiquity. Before we consider some of the relics of the

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

121 barony of Erris, county Mayo. It was at first intended that only the Parish of Kilmore, including the peninsula known as the Mullet (or Erris proper) and the Inishkea Islands should be undertaken, but unusual facilities for working the isolated district of Portacloy presenting themselves, it also was included in the inquiry.

The circumstances under which the work was carried on differed considerably from those experienced on the two previous occasions, the field being wider and the people more scattered; but the same methods were adhered to as far as possible, and this report has been drawn up on the same lines as its predecessors, in order to facilitate comparison and reference.

II.—Physiography.

131 The district dealt with in this Paper consists of two distinct localities,
101 one clearly defined, the parish of Kilmore, the other more indefinite in its boundaries, being a tract of wild mountainous country around the
631 little hamlet of Portacloy; both form part of the barony of Erris, in the extreme north-west of the Co. Mayo.

133 Kilmore includes the Mullet peninsula, the inhabited islands of North and South Inishkea, Duvillaun and Eagle Island, and a considerable number of uninhabited islets, the most remarkable of which is Inisglora (Inis Gluaire). The Mullet, or Erris proper, is a long narrow strip of land, nearly cut off from the mainland, as it is bounded on the east or landward side by Broadhaven and the magnificent Bay of Blacksod, some forty-five square miles in area, the only connection with the rest of Erris being by a narrow isthmus, about 200 yards in width. The peninsula runs nearly north and south; its extreme length is about fifteen miles, and its width varies from about seven miles in the northern part to less than half a mile near its southern extremity. The total area of the parish, including the islands, is 29,492 acres, or about 46 square miles.

The coast line, in the northern portion, consists mainly of high cliffs, indented by deep coves with precipitous and often overhanging walls, and in places pierced by caves and natural bridges. This precipitous coast extends from Broadhaven, on the north-east, round to Annagh Head on the west, a distance, following the coast line, of about thirty miles, the cliffs rising in many places to above 300 feet, and affording only three inlets of any size. Blind Harbour, on the
[504] north (200 acres in area, nearly all dry at low water), and Frenchport and Scotchport on the west, the others are either inaccessible from the land side or only practicable for curraghs. Erris Head forms the

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare.

(With Plate XI.[1]).

131 County Clare from the fourth century of our era was united politically with North Munster, Tuath Mumhain, or Thomond,
● 63| though separated from it by the broad waters of the Shannon. Standing thus by itself, "isolated by the Sea, the River, and the enmity of Connaught," it might be expected that it would preserve until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric past, and that a survey of its folklore would show many traces of ancient beliefs still surviving. The battle goddess *Catabodva*,
776 worshipped in antique Gaul, appears as the *Bodbh* of battle
787 (*cath*) in the wars fought by the Princes of Clare in 1014 and 1317, and the spirit that washed the bloodstained clothes and limbs of the then living combatants still, I was told three years ago, foretells calamity by washing clothes in the same waters.[2] *Péists* or water snakes,—emblems, perhaps, of pagan islanders or devouring seas and lakes,—abound in the legends of a very early date, and are still reputed to seize the cattle, and even human beings, drowned in the lakes of Clare. The place names con-
121 sidered below will show to what an extent our present nomen-
124 clature records the mythology and sagas of early days, and I propose in the remainder of this first paper to deal with the banshee, the death coach, and the fairies. The bulk of the traditions

[1] This plate of the Ancient Parishes of County Clare has been kindly lent by the Council of the Royal Irish Academy, and appears in their *Proceedings*, S. III., vol. iv.

[2] Cf. the *lavandières de nuit*, discussed by Sébillot, *Le Folk-lore de France*, Tome iii.

[p.180]